794 the calpul must have a powerful nagual, through which they can learn about the private lives of their subordinates. This is usually the way they know who has enough money to pay for a feast, who can occupy special jobs, and which sinners deserve punishment.

Religious Life

The Catholic Cult

177 The beliefs and religious practices intro-
797 duced by Catholic missionaries in the 16th
• 795 century have been adapted to the aborigi-
795 nal culture. The largest and most important
778 building of the village is the church, situ-
[346] ated on the east side of the ceremonial cen-
[361] ter. In it are the image of the patron saint
[776] of the group, the holy cross, and lesser
[796] saints. The most profound ceremonies take
[794] place before the altar of these saints, who are looked upon as mediators between God and men, and are performed by the cabildos de misa, dzunubiles, and other elderly men of high rank who know both Catholic and Indian ritual.

346 During the ceremonies the altar is deco-
796 rated with flowers and with paper and rib-
795 bons of different colors. The floor is covered with pine needles, which give off an agree-
[782] able fragrance. Candles and copal are part of every prayer and ceremony, the copal having been used since pre-Hispanic times.

795 Common prayers of people who visit the
782 center also have a place. These people have to enter the church and make an offering of candles to the patron saint. The prayers follow a formal pattern but vary in content according to the need and mood of the suppliant. Each individual talks intimately to the saint, specifying the help he needs, much as he would to a relative or a friend in whom he has absolute confidence. The two most frequent matters of petition are health and food; as the latter depends almost entirely on the condition of the cornfield, people pray that "it may not be damaged by the wind, or by cold, sun, birds, or plagues."

[P 221-A]

795 782 [778] In most of the prayers, Dios Tatik Jesucristo and the 13 *fiadores* who are in heaven are mentioned. These 13 fiadores are God's immediate helpers and correspond to the Christian saints. The cross is venerated as a representation of God wherever a prayer is said and so appears on the family altar, on mountaintops, in caves, at fountains, at entrances to the town, at the four corners of the plaza, and in front of the church.

795 778 776 177 The local character of Catholicism is seen in the Masses offered to the mountain called Ikal Ajau, near the ceremonial center of Oxchuc. The Indians say that it is a "living mountain" and give it great reverence, for Ikal Ajau was the name of the idol venerated by Oxchuc people in pre-Hispanic times. In almost all the municipios the saints are dressed as Indians. Towns with a large Ladino population have different saints for the Ladinos, who are dressed as Ladinos and to whom the Indians are completely indifferent, even to forgetting the names of them.

795 184 776

Fiesta for the Patron Saint

796 794 One of the major events in the religious life of the Indians is the annual fiesta in honor of the patron saint and the other saints kept in the church. The capitán principal and some of his immediate assistants are in charge of the organization and expenses of these fiestas. The length and cost of the fiesta correspond to the importance of the saint and range from one day and 100 pesos to four days and several thousand pesos, like the one for the patron saint. To become a capitán principal a man must go through all the ranks and be able to afford the expenses of any fiesta, from a small one to the very large ones of the patrons.

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796 The fiesta of the patron of each village is similar to that for any other saint but larger. There are Masses and other religious observances in the church, processions with the image of the saint along the main streets, large meals at the house of the cargoholders, and, above all, constant drink-

[P 221-B]

[Text continues on p. 222-B]

TABLE 20. Relationship of Individual to Compadres

Informant's family status	Occasion	Residence of compadre: Same section	Opposite section	Other barrio	Neighboring town	Total	Relationship: Relative	Non-relative	Total
65-year-old man, wife, 5 grown children	Baptism of godchild	13	5			18		18	18
	Wedding	31				31	12	19	31
	Baptism of own child	3			2	5		5	5
	Total	47	5		2	54	12	42	54
42-year-old man, wife, adopted daughter	Baptism of godchild	12	1			13	2	11	13
	Wedding	13	3	5		21	6	15	21
	Confirmation		2			2		2	2
	Blessing of loudspeaker	2			2	4		2	2
	Total	27	6	5	2	40	8	30	38
35-year-old man, wife, 5 children	Baptism of godchild	7				7	4	3	7
	Baptism of own child	4			1	5		5	5
	Wedding	4				4		4	4
	House saint	2				2	1	1	2
	Total	17			1	18	5	13	18
34-year-old widow	Baptism of godchild	17	1	1		19	15	4	19
	Wedding	7	3			10	2	8	10
	House saint	2	1		1	4	1	3	4
	Confirmation	1				1	1		1
	Total	27	5	1	1	34	19	15	34
	TOTAL	118	16	6	6	146	44	100	144

[p. 119]

N. Nash R-5 (1957-1967) 1970
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